

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9997

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13841

FOL SENT ACTION SAIGON FM DANANG

NOV 1, 1974:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 0541

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF LOCAL POLITICAL SITUATIN WITH THUA THIEN
PROVINCE CHIEF

1. OCT 31 DISCUSSED LOCAL POLITICAL SITUATIN WITH THUA THIEN
PROVINCE CHIEF COLONEL NGUYEN HUU DUE.

2. DUE SAID THAT POLITICAL SCENE IN HUE REMAINED QUIET DUE TO
CONTINUED COOPERATION OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND OTHER
NOTABLES WITH HIS ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID THAT HE HAS SPOKEN
WITH SENIOR BUDDHIST AND CATHOLIC LEADERS AND THEY HAVE AGREED
NOT TO PUT PROVOCATIVE BANNERS IN HUE ON NOV 1-2 AS HAD
PREVIOUSLY BEEN INTENDED.

3. ON NOV 1 BUDDHISTS WILL HAVE MEETING AT LOCAL PAGODA IN
MEMORY OF EVENTS OF 1963 CULMINATING IN OVERTHROW OF NGO DINH
DIEM. ON NOV 2 CATHOLICS WILL HOLD SERVICE IN LOCAL CATHEDRAL
IN MEMORY OF DIEM'S DEATH IN 1963. PROVINCE CHIEF DUE WILL
PARTICIPATE IN BOTH FUNCTIONS.

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4. EARLIER IN OCTOBER A HUE UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEADER NAMED TRAN VAN HOI WAS PICKED UP BY THE POLICE. HE HAD APPARENTLY MADE CONTACT WITH LOCAL COMMUNIST CADRE AND HAD INCRIMINATING DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION. ON OCT 29, AFTER RUMORS CIRCULATED THAT HOI HAD BEEN BEATEN AND TORTURED BY THE POLICE, THE STUDENTS OF THE PEDAGOGY FACULTY DEMANDED HIS RELEASE. DUE WENT TO HUE UNIVERSITY AND MET WITH "ABOUT 1,000 STUDENTS". STUDENT LEADER HOI ACCOMPANIED HIM.

5. DUE SAID THAT HE ASKED FOR THE STUDENTS' COOPERATION IN HELPING THE PEOPLE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HOI HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN MAKING CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND THAT WAS NOT THE WAY TO HELP THE PEOPLE. HE SAID THAT HOI HAD NOT BEEN MISTREATED AND THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO KEEP THE STUDENT LEADER IN JAIL. ACCORDING TO THE PROVINCE CHIEF, THE STUDENTS WERE IMPRESSED WITH HIS SINCERITY AND OPENNESS AND APPLAUDED HIM. ONE STUDENT SPEAKER NOTED TO THE GROUP THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME A SENIOR OFFICIAL HAD EVER BEEN SO FRANK AND OPEN WITH THEM AND THEY SHOULD ASSIST HIM IN WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE.

6. FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF DUE, HOI REMAINED ALONE WITH THE STUDENTS. OTHER STUDENTS REPORTED TO THE PROVINCE CHIEF THAT HOI TOLD THE STUDENTS THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN MISTREATED BY THE POLICE AND THAT HE RESPECTED THE PROVINCE CHIEF. REPORTEDLY HOI TOLD THE STUDENTS THAT HE RECOGNIZED THE ERROR OF HIS WAY AND WOULD NOT "WALK THAT WAY AGAIN."

7. DUE EXPLAINED THAT HE HANDLED THIS SITUATION IN THIS MANNER IN ORDER TO PREVENT A RELATIVELY MINOR PROBLEM FROM BALLOONING INTO A SERIOUS POLITICAL CAUSE CELEBRE. HE REASONS THAT NOW THAT HE HAS EXPOSED HOI'S CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNISTS HE HAS NEUTRALIZED HIM AS AN AGENT. HE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH HOI AND CAN STILL ACT AGAINST HIM IF HE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN HIS SUBVERSIVE CONTACTS.

8. ALSO ON OCT 31 DISCUSSED THIS INCIDENT WITH DR NGO DONG, DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SCHOOL OF HUE UNIVERSITY AND RECTOR-DESIGNATE OF THE QUANG DA COMMUNITY COLLEGE. DONG SAID THAT THE PROVINCE CHIEF HAD BEEN EVERY EFFECTIVE IN A SITUATION WHICH COULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF HAND. DONG ADDED THAT DUE HAD ORDERED POLICE CHIEF OF THUA THIEN NOT TO ARREST ANY

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STUDENTS IN HUE WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM PROVINCE CHIEF.

9. IN DONG'S OPINION THE MATTER IS CLOSED NOW. "AFTER TET (1968) 99 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE OF HUE KNOW THE COMMUNISTS FOR WHAT THEY ARE". ONCE THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT HOI HAD MADE CONTACT WITH VIET CONG CADRE THEY STOPPED SUPPORTING HIM, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE AUTHORITIES DID NOT OVER-REACT.
FRANCIS UNQUOTE MARTIN

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